

THE CONSOLATIONS OF GOD.

Have you ever seen, or perhaps made one of a party who are going to explore a dark, deep cavern—the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky or the Catacombs of Rome? They all stand out in the sunlight, and the attendants, who know the journey they are going to make, pass round them and put into the hands of each a lighted candle. How useless it seems—how pale and colorless the little flame appears in the generous flood of sunlight. But the procession moves along; one after another enters the dark cavern's mouth; one after another loses the splendor of day-light; in the hands of one after another the feeble candle light comes out bright in the darkness; and by-and-by they are all walking in the dark, holding fast their candles as if they were their very life—totally dependent upon what seemed so useless half an hour ago. That seems to me to be a picture of the way in which God's promises of consolation, which we attach very little meaning to at first, come out into beauty and value as we pass on into our lives.—*Phillips Brooks.*

"FOR MY SAKE."

These three little words are the touchstone of love. The application of this touchstone begins with infancy and ends only with the end of life. If that baby in the mother's arms could speak intelligibly it would say, "It is for my sake that a mother's eye watches unsleeping through the midnight hours, and her arms hold me until they are ready to drop off for weariness." "For my sake" many a successful man acknowledges gratefully that his parents toiled and economized in order to buy books and pay college bills. "For my sake" provides the sheltering roof and the arm chair for dear old grandma at the fire-side. Take these three words out of our language and you would rob home of its sweetness and human life of some of its noblest inspirations.—*Rev. Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

RELIGIOUS FAITHS IN JAPAN.

Shintoism is an ancient system of religion. Its chief deity is the sun goddess, who is invoked by 492 inferior gods, and by 2640 deified men. There are about 8,000,000 deities altogether. Its chief end is happiness and prosperity in this world. In their system, there was first

an egg, which divided, and an eternal substance arose and formed the heavens, and the sediment formed the earth; from the ground the first god arose in the form of a tree; finally, after many gods had come into being, the first male and female god and goddess appeared, named Izanagi and Izanami. The sun and moon were the first children of this pair. Jimmu Tenno, the first of the present emperor's line, was the fifth in descent from the sun goddess. He was born B. C. 660.

The first and the succeeding mikados are worshipped; shrines are erected to about 3000 canonized gods. Hachiman is the god of war; Yebisu is the god of fishermen; Inari is the god of the soil, and so on. The polished steel mirror, the symbol of the son, and strips of white paper, first supposed to attract the gods to the spot, which afterwards came to be themselves regarded as gods, and offerings of liquor, rice, and vegetables, are the only things seen in the temples of pure Shinto. There are about 98,000 Shinto shrines and over 100,000 Shinto officials. Their religion inculcates reverence for ancestors and imitation of their worthy deeds. On the great festival days the worship often consists of Bacchanalian processions, and until ten years ago, when they were stopped by order of the government, there were many licentious orgies connected with this worship.

Buddhism was introduced from Corea, about A. D. 500. There are about 200,000 Buddhist priests, including monks; there are also over 72,000 temples; these and the Shinto shrines are found almost literally "on every high hill and under every green tree." The bronze image of Buddha at Kamakura is sixty-five feet high; that at Nara is seventy feet. The Buddhists are divided into seven principal, and about twenty irregular, sects. With most of these sects, the doctrine taught is that of transmigration of souls,—a gradual approach toward the goal, Nirvana, or extinction of consciousness. This is accomplished by celibacy and various austerities.—*Missionary Herald.*

There is no favourite child of nature who may hold the fire ball in the hollow of his hand and trifle with it and not be burnt. There is no selected child of grace who can live an irregular life without unrest; or be proud and at the same time have peace; or indolent, and receive fresh inspiration; remain unloving and cold, and yet see, and hear, and feel the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.